

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

FLIGHT LINE ACCESS ROAD

SEYMOUR JOHNSON AIR FORCE BASE



Prepared by
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FLIGHT LINE ACCESS ROAD

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CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the proposed action, the need for the action and the agencies involved.

1.1.1 Action Proponent

The primary action proponent for this project is the 4th Civil Engineer Squadron (4 CES) of the 4th Fighter Wing (4 FW) at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (SJAFB), North Carolina.

1.1.2 Proposed Action

The proposed action is the construction of a road to provide better access to the flight line. The road will cross two branches of an unnamed stream that flows into Stoney Creek, a tributary of the Neuse River. The curbed road would be 28' wide and 2,700 feet in length. There would also be a 600 foot segment connecting the proposed road to an existing road. One stream crossing would use 48" reinforced concrete pipe with concrete headwalls and the other crossing would use dual 60" reinforced concrete pipe with concrete headwalls.

1.1.3 Location of Proposed Action

Seymour Johnson AFB is located in Goldsboro, North Carolina in central Wayne County (Figure 1). The Base is within the Neuse River-Stoney Creek watershed. The proposed road would be constructed on the grounds of the former Federal Prison Camp (FPC).

1.2 Need for the Proposed Action

The 4 FW is responsible for rapid deployment of F-15 Strike Eagles. This requires continual training to ensure that pilots, aircrew and groundcrew are prepared for the military mission. The flight line is paramount to SJAFB's activities. Currently the flight line has limited access points, with the majority located on the eastern side of the runway. From the western side of the base, vehicles must travel around the former FPC and bulk fuels storage area to reach an access point. The proposed action would provide a more direct route to the flight line reducing travel time and road deterioration and would also allow emergency vehicles to respond quicker to the flight line during an emergency. A secondary need for the proposed road is to reduce the incidence of FOD (foreign object damage). Road debris, such as rocks, can be picked up by tires as a vehicle travels on a road and then redeposited on the flight line. This type of debris poses a major hazard to aircraft. Shorter travel distance can reduce the potential for a vehicle to collect debris in the tires.

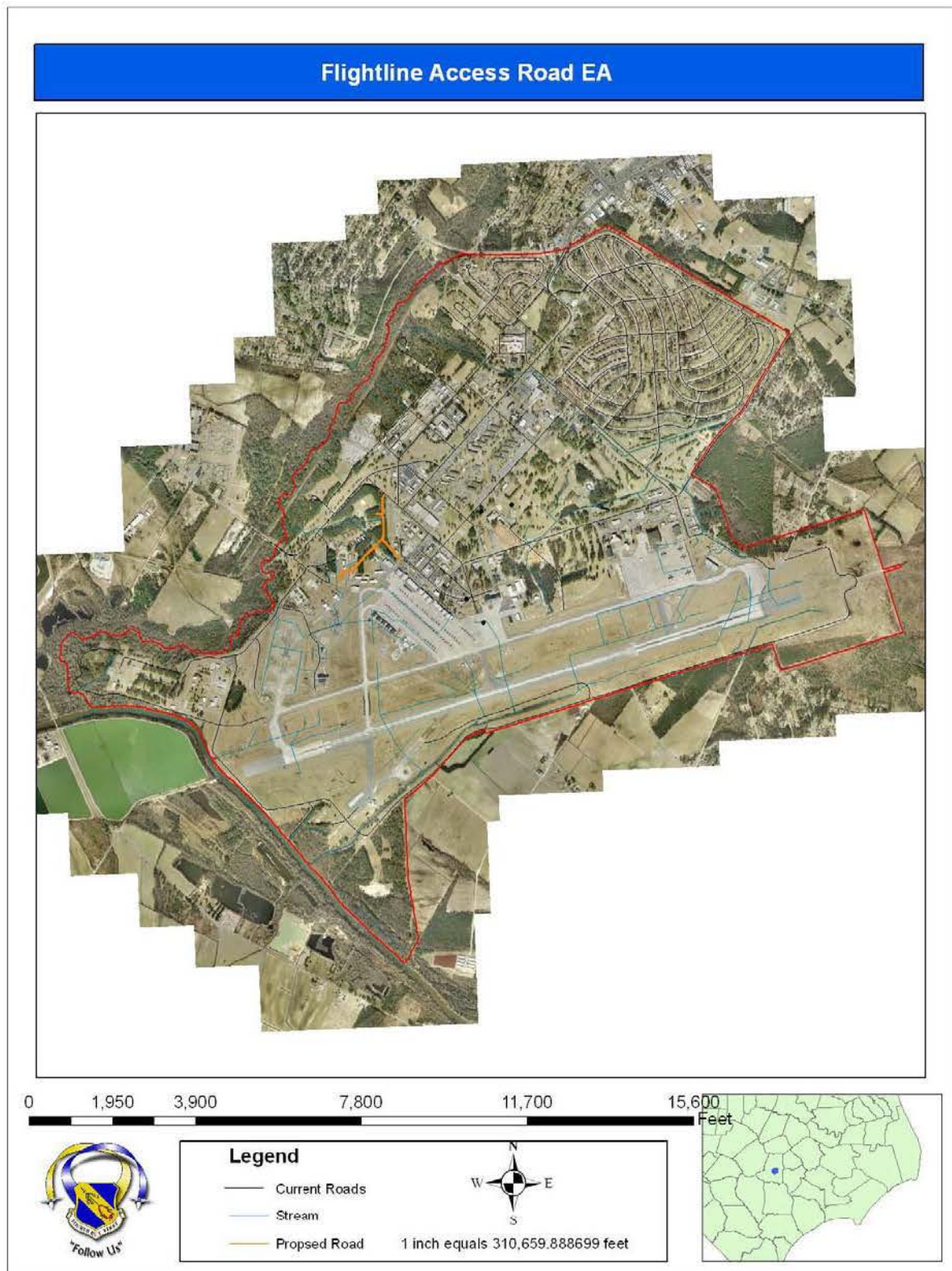


Fig 1. Location of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Wayne County, NC.

1.3 Project Objectives

The project objective is to provide faster access to the flight line than what is currently available, which will reduce emergency response times and decrease the chances of foreign object debris being transported and deposited on the flight line.

1.4 Laws and Regulations

Laws and regulations influencing the scope of this environmental assessment are the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, and 32 CFR 989 (USAF Environmental Impact Analysis Program).

1.5 Decisions To Be Made

The 4th Fighter Wing Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Council Chairman will:

- 1) Select an alternative
- 2) Determine whether the selected alternative is consistent with the Wing Infrastructure Development Outlook Plan
- 3) Determine if the selected alternative would have significant effects (and whether to prepare an environmental impact statement) or issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

1.6 Scope of the Environmental Analysis

1.6.1 Agency Involvement

A US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) representative visited the proposed site and determined that a USACE permit would be required for construction of the road due to the two crossings of an unnamed tributary of Stoney Creek. The State of North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) also requires a 401 permit for any activity involving water resources. SJAFB would obtain the necessary permits (USACE 404 and DWQ 401) before beginning construction.

1.6.2 Public Involvement

The EA was made available for public review and comment for a 30-day period. No public comments were received.

1.6.3 Issues Eliminated from Detailed Study

The following issues would not be impacted by the proposed action and were eliminated from further detail.

1.6.3.1 Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ)/Land Use

The proposed action is within AICUZ principles.

1.6.3.2 Air Quality

The proposed action would have no effect on air quality.

1.6.3.3 Coastal Zones

The proposed project area is not located in a North Carolina coastal zone county.

1.6.3.4 Cultural Resources

A base-wide cultural resources survey of SJAFB conducted in 1996 by Pan American Consultants, Inc., determined that cultural resources are not present in the proposed project area.

1.6.3.5 Hazardous Materials/Waste

An Environmental Baseline Survey (EBS) for the closure and transfer of the FPC from Bureau of Prisons to Seymour Johnson AFB was completed April 15, 2006. This survey found no hazardous materials or waste in the project area. The construction of the road would not generate hazardous waste.

1.6.3.6 Wetlands

The proposed action would not occur in wetlands.

1.6.3.7 Threatened and Endangered Species

No federally protected plant or animal species are known to occur on SJAFB.

1.6.4 Issues Studied in Detail

The following issues are studied in further detail in Chapter 3, Affected Environment.

- **Biological Resources**
- **Ground and Surface Water**
- **Safety and Occupational Health**
- **Socioeconomics**

1.7 Consultation Requirements

The construction of a road which crosses waters of the US requires a permit from USACE. A representative from USACE conducted a site visit to the proposed action area and determined that the water segments, which are unnamed tributaries to Stoney Creek, are considered waters of the US and fall under USACE's jurisdiction and therefore a permit would be required to construct a stream crossing.

The Neuse River watershed is protected by North Carolina Riparian Buffer Protection Rules, which are set to protect 50-foot wide riparian buffers directly adjacent to surface waters in the Neuse River Basin (intermittent streams, perennial streams, lakes, ponds, and estuaries). Road crossings that impact less than 40 feet of buffer are exempt from requiring approval or mitigation from NC Department of Water Quality. However, due to Neuse River Buffer Rules, a DWQ 401 permit is required for the proposed project. SJAFB would apply for both the State and USACE permits when funding is allocated for this project.

CHAPTER 2 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the proposed action and action alternatives, to include no action. The environmental consequences of those actions are summarized and measured in terms of impacts and achievement of the objective.

2.2 Action Alternatives

Three alternatives were examined for the proposed action.

2.2.1 Alternative A: No Action

Alternative A is the no action alternative and under it, the road would not be built. The result is that vehicles that enter at Gate 2 (Slocumb Street Gate) would have to continue to travel to and from the flight line area by a circuitous route around the former Federal Prison Camp and fuel storage facility. Also, the emergency response time for the western portion of the flight line area could not be reduced.

2.2.2 Alternative B: Construct a Flight Line Access Road (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative B, a road would be built through the former Federal Prison Camp (Figure 2). The road would cross two unnamed tributaries of Stoney Creek. The proposed road would be 28 feet wide and 2700 feet in length. A 600 foot segment would also be constructed to connect the proposed road to an existing road. This alternative also includes the construction and expansion of an existing parking lot near Building 3399.

2.2.3 Alternative C: Construct Flight Line Access Road using a Different Route

Under Alternative C the road would be constructed so as not to cross the streams. The relatively small project area (56 acres) short road length, location of streams, and location of adjacent facilities make bypassing the streams impossible, therefore this alternative will not be further analyzed as it is not practical.

2.3 Comparison of Predicted Effects

The following comparison matrix summarizes the predicted effects of the alternatives on the relevant environmental resources and project objectives. Chapter 4 describes these predictions in detail.

Flight Line Access Road EA

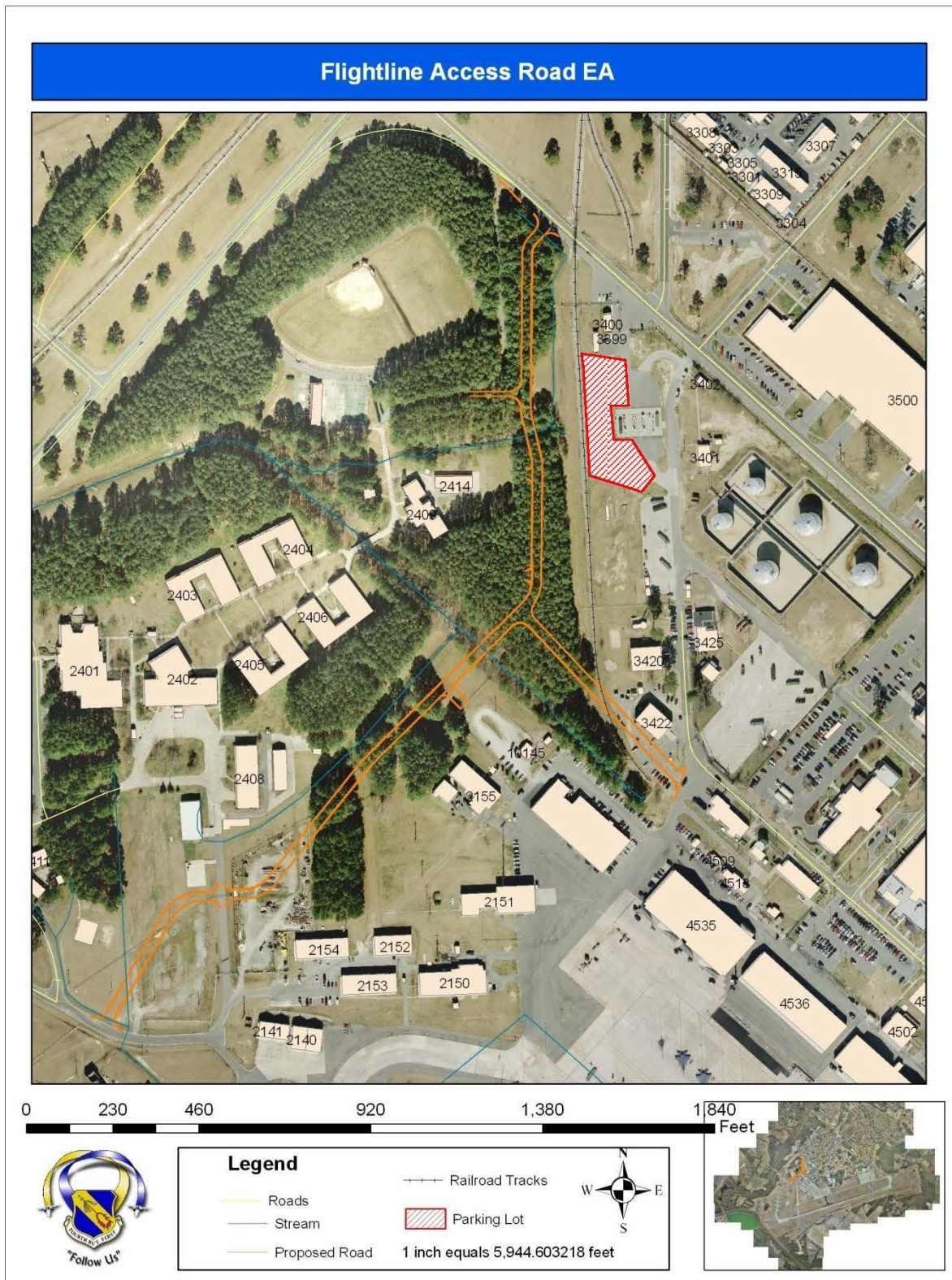


Fig. 2. Site of proposed road and current conditions.

Table 1. Comparison of Alternatives. Chapter 4 describes these predictions in detail.

	Alternative A: No Action	Alternative B: Construct road
PROJECT OBJECTIVES		
Provide faster access to flight line	No	Yes
Reduce incidents of FOD	No	Yes
Reduce emergency response time	No	Yes
RESOURCE AREAS		
Biological Resources	No Impact	No Significant Impact Removes 1 acre tree canopy
Safety/Occupational Health	Negative Impact Does not reduce response time/FOD risk	Positive Impact Reduces response time/FOD risk
Ground / Surface Waters	No Impact	No Significant Impact Does not impede water flow

2.4 Preferred Alternative

Alternative B is the Air Force's preferred alternative.

CHAPTER 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the existing environmental conditions of the area where the proposed action would occur. This section, in conjunction with the description of the no-action alternative, describes the baseline conditions against which the decision-maker and the public can compare the effects of all the alternatives.

NEPA and CEQ regulations specify that an EA should focus only on those resource areas potentially subject to impacts. In addition, the level of analysis applied to any given resource area should be commensurate with the level of impact anticipated for that resource. Applying these guidelines to this EA, descriptions of the affected environment are provided for biological resources, water resources, and safety and occupational health.

3.2 Current Conditions

The closed FPC comprises 56 acres of the 3233 acres of Seymour Johnson AFB. The Base is typical of an active military installation with a flight line and associated maintenance hangars and workshops, an area with administrative buildings and retail and recreational facilities, and military housing area. Land use types are:

- Land under impervious surfaces 25%
- Improved grounds 41%
- Semi-improved grounds 22%
- Unimproved grounds 12%

The closed FPC has administrative buildings, inmate housing facilities, dining hall, chapel, athletic facilities, such as running track, basketball court and softball field, and parking areas.

3.2.1 Biological Resources

The FPC was landscaped and the plant community is typical of an area that is maintained through regular mowing, and trimming of hedges and trees. The perimeter of the FPC is forested with pine trees. The area supports birds, small mammals and insects.

3.2.2 Ground and Surface Water

Two forks of an unnamed tributary to Stoney Creek are on the site, which originate from storm water drainage ditches. The streams range from four to 10 feet wide and approximately one to two feet deep, and have a low volume except during storm events when the flow increases. The streams support small fish and frogs.

3.2.3 Safety and Occupational Health

SJAFB's primary mission is flying fighter jets, and the Air Force has procedures in place to minimize the risk of safety mishaps. One of the most prevalent risks to air operations is foreign object debris and foreign object damage (FOD). FOD results when small objects such as rocks or stones, hardware (nuts, bolts, screws), and/or trash on the flight line are ingested by aircraft engines. The resulting damage can be very costly, and in extreme cases deadly. To prevent damage to aircraft, personnel on the flight line are prohibited from wearing headgear, personnel must keep strict custody records for any tool used on the flight line, and vehicles must stop at checkpoints before entering the flight line area and remove any debris lodged in the tire tread.

The Fire Department is located adjacent to the flight line and can provide immediate response in case of an emergency. The Base Medical Clinic, however, is located closer to the administrative and housing areas (Figure 3). The limited access may reduce response time both to and from the flight line area in an emergency. In the case of a catastrophic event, the access points may become crowded with fire trucks, ambulances and security police vehicles.

3.2.4 Socioeconomics

The majority of Air Force energy consumption is in the use of fuel. In fiscal year 2006, SJAFB used 47,425,034 gallons of fuel. The majority of fuel, 47.1 million gallons, was jet fuel, and reducing consumption can not be accomplished without compromising the mission. However, an area where fuel reduction is attainable is by reducing miles driven by the fleet of government vehicles used to support the flying mission.

Approximately 264,649 gallons of diesel, biodiesel and gasoline fuel was consumed in 2006. Reducing travel distances would reduce fuel usage and costs.

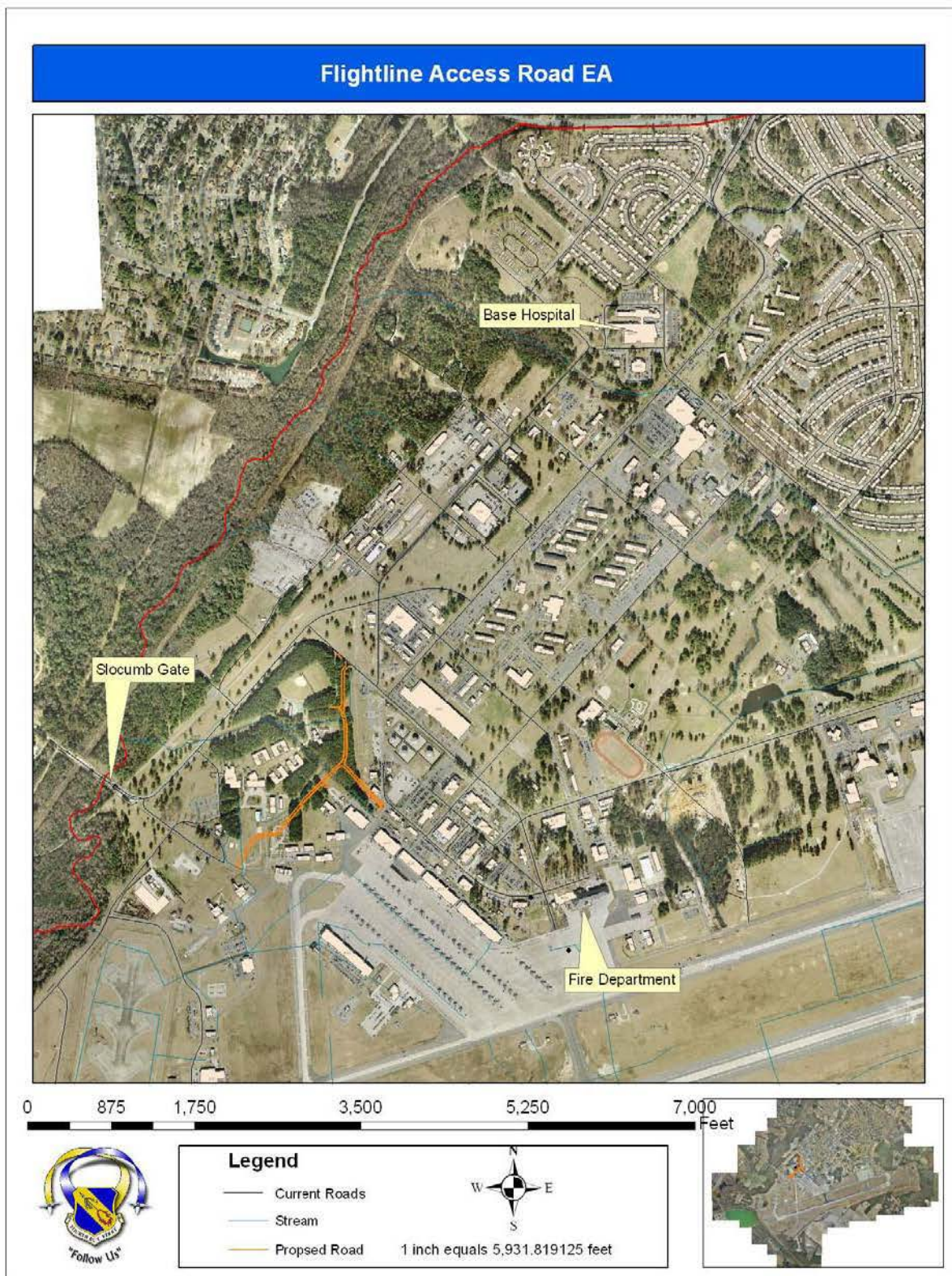


Fig. 3. Site of proposed road in relation to west end aircraft parking ramp and flight line.

CHAPTER 4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the impacts of the alternatives on the issues that were studied in detail. It addresses the environmental effects that cannot be avoided. The cumulative impacts and irreversible and irretrievable consequences are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2 Impacts of Alternative A: No Action

Under Alternative A, a flight line access road would not be constructed. Access to the flight line would continue to require vehicles to travel around the former Federal Prison Camp and bulk fuels storage. Vehicle fuel usage would continue to be at present levels with no opportunities for reduction. Emergency response time to the western portion of the flight line would not be reduced. By not reducing travel routes, the opportunity to reduce the incidence of FOD would be lost.

4.2.1 Biological Resources

There would be no impact to biological resources if the road was not constructed.

4.2.2 Surface and Ground Water

If the road was not constructed, the stream crossings would not be built and there would be no impact to water resources.

4.2.3 Safety and Occupational Health

Safety and occupational health would be negatively impacted if Alternative A were chosen. The response time of emergency vehicles for some areas of the flight line would not be reduced and the rate of FOD being deposited on the flight line would not be decreased.

4.2.4 Socioeconomics

Socioeconomics would also be negatively impacted under Alternative A. Government vehicles would not be able to reduce fuel usage by reducing travel routes. Private contractors and vendors that enter the base from the Slocumb Street Gate would have to continue to travel from the western area of the base to the eastern area to access the flight line, requiring more fuel. Trucks entering SJAFB are required to use the Slocumb Street Gate. If the proposed road were constructed, those delivering to the flight line area could reduce both their travel costs and delivery time.

4.3 Impacts of Alternative B: Construct Flight Line Access Road

Alternative B is the construction of a road through the closed Federal Prison Camp and would cross two segments of an unnamed tributary to Stoney Creek. This alternative would provide a quicker access to the western portion of the flight line reducing travel time and potential for damage to aircraft due to debris on the flight line.

4.3.1. Biological Resources

Under Alternative B, the proposed action would remove approximately 1700 linear feet, or approximately 1.1 acres, of loblolly pine trees. The 1999 Urban Forestry Management Plan estimated that SJAFB had 4032 loblolly pine trees. The proposed action would remove approximately 1% of SJAFB's loblolly pines. The trees must be removed because the proximity of railroad tracks prevents the road from being located outside of the current tree line.

The Neuse River Buffer Rules, administered by the Division of Water Quality, requires "that up to 50 feet of riparian area be protected and maintained on the banks of waterways in the basin". However, road crossings that impact less than 40 feet of buffer are exempt. The road is 28 feet wide and therefore exempt from the Neuse Buffer Rules.

4.3.2. Surface and Ground Water

The two unnamed tributaries on the former FPC are minor, intermittent streams. The streams have a low flow volume which increases during storm events. Reinforced concrete pipes will be used to support the road crossing and allow flow to continue naturally. The flow of the stream would not be impeded by the pipes, and the aquatic life (such as small fish and frogs) will be able to utilize the entire stream length.

4.3.3. Safety and Occupational Health

The proposed action would have a positive impact on safety and occupational health. The intake suction from a jet engine is powerful enough to ingest any loose material on the runway/flight line. Loose material is referred to as FOD (Foreign Objects and Debris), which are usually rocks, tools, nuts/screws, or trash. If an engine ingests FOD, the damage is also referred to as FOD (Foreign Object Damage). FOD incidents are most common during take-off and landings, and can result in death. In Fiscal Year 2006, Seymour Johnson AFB had 36 preventable (non wildlife or weather related) FOD incidents, costing \$101,896.91. The construction of a road which reduces the distance traveled to reach the flight line also reduces the potential for vehicles to collect FOD in the tires and then redeposit it on the flight line.

The proposed action would also improve emergency vehicles response time to the flight line area. Ambulances responding from the base hospital would have multiple routes to use and would be closer to the Slocumb Street Gate in the event patients would need to be transported to the county hospital. The additional access point would also allow more vehicles to respond from different areas of the base and would allow for the faster evacuation of personnel if need be.

CHAPTER 5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Federal and US Air Force regulations implementing NEPA (42 USC § 4321 et seq. and 32 CFR 989, respectively) require that the cumulative impacts of a proposed action be assessed. CEQ regulations implementing the procedural provision of NEPA define cumulative impacts as: “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions” (40 CFR 1507).

In order to analyze cumulative effects, a cumulative effects region must be identified within which effects of the proposed action and other past, proposed, and reasonably foreseeable actions would be cumulatively recorded or experienced. For this EA, the region where cumulative effects may occur includes all of SJAFB.

5.1 Cumulative Projects

SJAFB is home to the 4th Fighter Wing and 916th Aerial Refueling Wing (ARW). The mission of the 4 FW is to maintain worldwide deployable all-weather F-15E Strike Eagle and personnel capable of executing combat missions in support of the Aerospace Expeditionary Force.

5.1.1. BRAC Related Projects

The 916 ARW at SJAFB will receive eight additional KC-135R Refueling Tankers as part of the Congressionally mandated Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. In addition to the airplanes, three current facilities will be expanded and two new facilities will be constructed in the 916 ARW support area. The current engine repair facility (CIRF) will be expanded and the number of personnel will be increased. The proposed road would provide an alternate route to the facility. The environmental assessment 2005 Base Realignment and Closure, Seymour Johnson AFB was prepared to examine the impacts of the BRAC projects. The EA was distributed to the North Carolina State Clearinghouse and local libraries for a public comment period of thirty-days. The Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on 5 July, 2007.

5.1.2. Wing Development Outlook Plan

The Wing Infrastructure Development Outlook Plan (WINDO) outlines the infrastructure improvements needed to support the Air Force and SJAFB's mission for 10 years (2005-2015). The WINDO detailed 56 infrastructure improvements, which included new construction, demolitions, and additions and upgrades to various facilities and services. A FONSI/FONPA was signed on 20 October 2005.

5.2 Cumulative Impact Analysis

This section addresses, for each resource area, the additive effects of the proposed action in conjunction with the projects identified above. Since Alternative A (No Action) represents no change from existing conditions, no cumulative impacts would occur.

5.2.1 Biological Resources

Cumulative impacts from the proposed action and other planned projects would not affect biological resources. The expansion of facilities occurring from BRAC and WINDO projects are occurring in previously disturbed areas which will not involve the removal of large areas of vegetation.

5.2.2 Water Resources

Future actions and the proposed access road would not cumulatively impact water resources, as no other projects are planned to occur near rivers, streams or wetlands.

5.2.3 Safety and Occupational Health

There would be no negative impacts to safety or occupational health through cumulative actions. All proposed projects must comply with safety and occupational health regulations.

5.3 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that environmental analysis include identification of "...any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented." Irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments are related to the use of non-renewable resources and the effects that the uses of these resources have on future generations. Irreversible commitments are those that cannot be reversed, except perhaps in the long term. Irretrievable resource commitments involve the loss in value of an affected resource that cannot be restored as a result of the action.

Resources that are irreversibly or irretrievably committed to a project are those that are used on a long-term or permanent basis. These resources are irretrievable in that once they are used for a project, they are no longer available for other purposes. The proposed road would use construction materials, energy and human labor, all of which would become irretrievable commitment of resources. In order to build the road, trees and maintained grass areas would be converted to asphalt. This would not be irreversible, as the road could be removed and trees and grass replanted in the area.

CHAPTER 6 LIST OF PREPARERS

Busch, Laura; Environmental Planner, Fourth Civil Engineer Squadron, Asset Management Flight, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, NC. 7 years experience. BS Agriculture Economics, MS Beef Cattle Science, MAg Rangeland Ecology and Management

CHAPTER 7 LIST OF AGENCIES

Internally, this Environmental Assessment will be distributed to

- ◆ Fourth Fighter Wing Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Council

Additionally, a copy this Environmental Assessment will be sent to:

- ◆ North Carolina State Clearinghouse
- ◆ Wayne County Public Library, Goldsboro, NC

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Name of Action Flight Line Access Road
 Goldsboro, North Carolina
 Environmental Assessment (EA)

As Chairman of, and with the concurrence of the Seymour Johnson AFB Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Council, I have decided to implement Alternative B: Construct a flight line access road (as identified in the attached EA).

Rationale for the Selection of the Proposed Alternative

I have selected Alternative B over the other two alternatives because it best satisfies Seymour Johnson AFB's objective to have a more direct route to the western portion of the flight line, providing faster access, decreasing response time for emergency vehicles, and reducing the possibility of FOD being transported and deposited on the flight line.

I did not choose the Alternative A: No Action, because it does not meet this objective.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The attached EA was prepared and evaluated pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (Public Law 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). I conclude that implementing Alternative B does not constitute a "major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment," considering direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. Therefore, we will not prepare an environmental impact statement. We will make this EA and associated FONSI available to the public for a 30-day comment period before constructing the flight line access road in accordance with 32 CFR 989.

The point of contact regarding this FONSI and the associated EA is Mr. Donald Abrams, 4th Civil Engineer Squadron, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina 27531-2355. The telephone number is (919) 722-5168.

DATE

DANIEL R. DEBREE, Colonel, USAF
Vice Commander, 4th Fighter Wing

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Name of Action Flight Line Access Road
 Goldsboro, North Carolina
 Environmental Assessment (EA)

As Chairman of, and with the concurrence of the Seymour Johnson AFB Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Council, I have decided to implement Alternative B: Construct a flight line access road (as identified in the attached EA).

Rationale for the Selection of the Proposed Alternative


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I did not choose the Alternative A: No Action, because it does not meet this objective.

Finding of No Significant Impact

The attached EA was prepared and evaluated pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (Public Law 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). I conclude that implementing Alternative B does not constitute a "major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment," considering direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. Therefore, we will not prepare an environmental impact statement. We will make this EA and associated FONSI available to the public for a 30-day comment period before constructing the flight line access road in accordance with 32 CFR 989.

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DANIEL R. DEBREE, Colonel, USAF
Vice Commander, 4th Fighter Wing